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# MV *Tricolor*

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Coordinates: 51°22′00″N 2°12′07″E﻿ / ﻿

**MV *Tricolor*** was a 50,000 tonne [Norwegian](#)-flagged vehicle carrier built in 1987, notable for having been involved in three [English Channel](#) collisions within a [fortnight](#).

## Contents

- 1 [History](#)
- 2 [Collision and sinking, 14 December 2002](#)
- 3 [Danger to shipping](#)
- 4 [Salvage](#)
- 5 [See also](#)
- 6 [References](#)
- 7 [External links](#)

## History [[edit](#)]

MV *Tricolor* was originally launched in 1987 as *Nosac Sun*.<sup>[1]</sup> At the time of her collision with

### History

Name:	<i>Nosac Sun</i>
Builder:	Tsuneishi Shipbuilding Co. Ltd, Japan
Yard number:	589
Launched:	3 March 1987
Identification:	<a href="#">IMO Number</a> 8600181
Fate:	sold



### Norway

Name:	<i>Tricolor</i>
Owner:	Capital Bank, Scotland
Acquired:	1996
Fate:	sank following collision

### General characteristics

Class and type:	Single screw PCTC (Pure Car Truck Carrier)
Tonnage:	49,792 <a href="#">GT</a>

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 [Edit links](#)

*Kariba* she was operated by [Wilh. Wilhelmsen](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

Length:	190 m (620 ft)
Beam:	32.2 m (106 ft)
Draught:	9.12 m (29.9 ft)

## Collision and sinking, 14 December 2002 [\[edit\]](#)

During the early hours of 14 December 2002, while traveling from [Zeebrugge, Belgium](#) to [Southampton, U.K.](#), with a load of nearly 3,000 [automobiles](#), she collided with *Kariba*, a 1982 [Bahamian](#)-flagged [container ship](#). *Kariba* was able to continue on, but *Tricolor* sank where she was struck, some 17 nautical miles (20 mi) north of the French coast within the French [Exclusive economic zone](#) in the [English Channel](#).<sup>[2]</sup> While no lives were lost, the ship remained lodged on her side in the mud of the 30 metres (98 ft) deep waterway. A third vessel, MV *Clary* was alleged to have contributed to the collision in subsequent litigation as having caused an "embarrassment of navigation".<sup>[3]</sup>

The sinking occurred off [Dunkirk](#) harbor, which is France's most northerly seaport and France's third largest port after [Marseille](#) and [Le Havre](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

## Danger to shipping [\[edit\]](#)

Because of the location of the sunken vessel, at a point where two lanes combine in the [Traffic Separation Scheme](#) (TSS) of the [English Channel](#) and the Southern part of the [North Sea](#) and the fact that she was just completely submerged, the wreck was considered as a hazard to navigation. The TSS at that location is one of the busiest shipping-lanes in the world. In December 2002 French authorities ordered the wreck to be removed, as it was perceived to represent a danger to shipping and the environment. Declaring the vessel a hazard to navigation was an understatement as two more collisions happened with MV *Tricolor* in the days after the sinking.<sup>[2]</sup>

Following the sinking and due to its location in a busy point of a shipping lane (the location was on the edge of a turning-point within the TSS of the [English Channel](#)), the wreck was initially guarded by the [French maritime police patrol boat P671 \*Glaive\*](#) and [HMS \*Anglesey\*](#) (a 195 ft British [Island-class patrol vessel](#)), in addition to two salvage vessels and three wreck buoys.<sup>[5]</sup>

The English Channel is one of the busiest seaways in the world and, despite standard radio warnings, three guard ships, and a lighted buoy, the Dutch vessel *Nicola* struck the wreck the next night, and had to be towed free. After this, two additional patrol ships and six more buoys were installed, including one with a [Racon warning transponder](#). However, on 1 January 2003 the loaded [Turkish](#)-registered fuel carrier *Vicky* struck the same wreck; she was later freed by the rising tide.

## Salvage [\[edit\]](#)

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The [salvage](#) operation of MV *Tricolor* was done by a [consortium](#) of companies under the name [Combinatie Berging Tricolor](#) (Combination for Salvaging Tricolor) that was led by the [Dutch](#) company [Smit International](#), and took well over a year. The consortium consisted of Smit Salvage [BV](#), Scaldis Salvage & Marine Contractors [NV](#), URS Salvage & Marine Contracting [NV](#) and Multraship Salvage [BV](#). The contract for the wreck-removal with this consortium was signed on 11 April 2003.<sup>[2]</sup>

Starting in July 2003, the operation was declared complete on 27 October 2004. The salvage method included a [carbide](#)-encrusted cutting cable used to slice the wreck into nine sections of 3,000 [tonnes](#) each. This technique was similar to one Smit International had used in salvaging most of the [Russian](#) nuclear [submarine](#), [K-141 Kursk](#).<sup>[6]</sup>

The Dutch company [C.T. Systems](#), together with [Thales Navigation](#) (later renamed [Magellan Navigation](#)), handled the navigational aspects of the operation. The positioning equipment

provided the required locational accuracy and after using a [side scan sonar](#), the debris had been located and all the relevant positional information converted to a chart, enabling a systematic search and recovery of the remaining debris.

The cargo of 2,871 new cars – mostly from premium German and Swedish manufacturers including [BMW](#), [Volvo](#) and [SAAB](#) – was removed from the wreck and recycled for the metal component. Most oil was removed from the ship's tanks soon after it sank, but during the salvage there was a 540-tonne oil spill, sparking concern.

## See also [\[edit\]](#)

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- [Baltic Ace](#), another car carrier that sank in the North Sea in 2012.
- [Cougar Ace](#), a car carrier with 4,812 vehicles which capsized but did not sink, in 2006.

## References [\[edit\]](#)

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1. <sup>^</sup> ["SP Shipbase - Tricolor"](#) [↗](#). 28 December 2005. Retrieved 14 November 2009.
2. <sup>^</sup> [a b c d "Tricolor wreck-removal contract signed today"](#) [↗](#) (Press release). Wilh. Wilhelmsen Group. 11 April 2003. Archived from [the original](#) [↗](#) on 13 September 2011. Retrieved 12 February 2012.
3. <sup>^</sup> ["In re Otal Investments Ltd. – the MV "Kariba" "](#) [↗](#). 8 July 2005. Retrieved 8 June 2015.
4. <sup>^</sup> ["Dunkirk Ferry - More About Dunkirk"](#) [↗](#). Retrieved 22 January 2015.
5. <sup>^</sup> ["Hansard Volume 642 cc782-4 782"](#) [↗](#). 19 December 2002. Retrieved 13 September 2009.
6. <sup>^</sup> ["Summary of project MV Tricolo"](#) [↗](#). Smit International. Retrieved 12 February 2012.

## External links [\[edit\]](#)

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- [Supplementary report to the inquiry into the collision between the car carrier \*Tricolor\* and the container vessel \*Kariba\* on 14 December 2002](#)



near Westhinder  (Archive ) - Bureau d'Enquêtes sur les Événements de Mer



- Rapport d'enquête complémentaire Abordage entre le navire transporteur de voitures TRICOLOR et le porte-conteneurs KARIBA  (in French) (Archive ) - Bureau d'Enquêtes sur les Événements de Mer
- "New Tricolor spill spotted .
- Photos of the wreck 
- High-resolution photos of the sliced hull 

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